

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 MCT-01 ACDA-07 /080 W
-----073377 261821Z /50

R 261620Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6375
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
DIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USNMR SHAPE BEL
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NICOSIA 2262

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC
USCINCEUR FOR POLAD
USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, CY
SUBJECT: ELECTION OF ARCHBISHOP: BATTLE HEATS UP

REF: NICOSIA 2188 (DTG 191640Z AUG 77)

1. SUMMARY: POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH SUPPORT KYPRIANOU
FOR FULL-TERM PRESIDENCY HAVE REACTED SWIFTLY AND IN UNISON
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THIS WEEK TO FORM PHALANX BEHIND ACTING ARCHBISHOP
CYRSYOSTOMOS IN ATTEMPT TO BLOCK AN ABORNING CHALLENGE FROM
THE RIGHT IN RACE FOR ARCHBISHOP'S THRONE. PARTISAN POLITICS
HAVE BEEN REINJECTED WITH A VENGEANCE INTO CHURCH AFFAIRS, AND
VICE VERSA. COALITION WHICH MAKARIOS PUT TOGETHER TO
ENFORCE TOTALLY HIS OWN POLITICAL WISHES CONTINUES TO
HOLD THE BALANCE OF POWER. IT HAS NOW THROWN ITS WEIGHT

BEHIND CHRYSOSTOMOS, CREATING THE IMPROBABLE PHENOMENON OF A COMMUNIST PARTY PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE IN A CHURCH ELECTION. MODERATE ELEMENTS ARE SEEKING TO BLOCK CHRYSOSTOMOS BY SUPPORTING BISHOP OF LIMASSOL CHRYSANTHOS. END SUMMARY.

2. BISHOP CHRYSANTHOS HIT THE HEADLINES AUG 20 IN INTERVIEW WITH RIGHTIST NEWSPAPER SIMERINI IN WHICH HE CHARGED HE WAS BEING SUBJECTED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES FROM UNNAMED SOURCES TO STAY OUT OF RUNNING. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, HE WOULD SERVE IF ELECTED. HE CALLED ON POLITICAL PARTIES TO STAY OUT OF ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS AND SAID HE WAS OPPOSED TO CHURCH INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS. FOLLOWING DAY, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, CHRYSANTHOS CARRIED HIS COMPLAINTS TO ACTING PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU, WHO PROMISED THAT GOVERNMENT MACHINERY WOULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN ARCH-BISHOPAL ELECTION. CHRYSANTHOS AMPLIFIED CHARGES IN AUG 22 STATEMENT TO PRESS THAT HE HAD RECEIVED THREATS TO HIS LIFE IF ELECTED AS ARCHBISHOP.

3. PRESS IN GENERAL TOOK UP THE ISSUE, SPLITTING ALONG IDEOLOGICAL LINES. RIGHTISH PAPERS DEPLORED PRESSURES ON CHRYSANTHOS, CALLED FOR GENUINELY FREE ELECTIONS, AND URGED SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE. LEFTIST PAPERS PAID LIP SERVICE TO CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION, POOH-POOHED CHRYSANTHOS' CHARGES, AND CALLED FOR UNITY BEHIND ONE CANDIDATE FOR ARCH-BISHOP.

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4. IN TRANSPARENTLY CONCERTED ACTION AUG 23, COOPERATING PARTIES OF POPULAR FRONT ISSUED STATEMENTS SUPPORTING CANDIDACY OF CHRYSOSTOMOS. DEMOCRATIC PARTY (KYPRIANOU) SAID BISHOP OF PAPHOS WAS CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF MAKARIOS, HAD LEADERSHIP QUALITIES, AND WAS A MILITANT SPIRIT DEDICATED TO IDEALS OF DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM, AND JUSTICE. SOCIALIST EDEK PARTY SAID THAT SINCE FOREIGN CONSPIRACY HAS INSTIGATED ELECTORAL STRIFE, IT WAS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT BISHOP OF PAPHOS. COMMUNIST AKEL PARTY SAID BISHOP OF PAPHOS WAS CHOSEN BY MAKARIOS AS SUCCESSOR, WAS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO IMPERIALISM AND NATO IMPOSED SOLUTION OF CYPRUS PROBLEM, AND MOREOVER, HAD CONTRIBUTED TO UNOPPOSED ELECTION OF KYPRIANOU AS PRESIDENT. AKEL PLEDGED ITS SUPPORT.

5. SEVERAL PAPERS, IN WAKE OF COOPERATING PARTIES' STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR CHRYSOSTOMOS, SAW HIS ELECTION AS FOREGONE CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, SIMERINI UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTED FAIRLY BROAD SAMPLE OF OPINION IN IRONICAL EDITORIAL WHICH SAID AKEL'S SUPPORT OF CHRYSOSTOMOS WAS REMINISCENT OF EDICTS OF OTTOMAN RULERS; CHRISTIANS NEED NO LONGER BE CONCERNED ABOUT ELECTION OF ARCHBISHOP, MARXISTS IN AKEL HAD MADE DECISION

FOR THEM.

6. POT WAS KEPT BOILING BY PRESS REVELATION AUG 25 THAT A LARGE EXPLOSIVE DEVICE (28 STICKS OF DYNAMITE), HAD BEEN DISCOVERED PLACED AGAINST THE WALL OF CHRYSANTHOS' OFFICIAL RESIDENCE. POLICE DEFUSED DEVICE AND INVESTIGATION IS CONTINUING.

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7. COMMENT: AMONG MANY ORDINARY CYPRIOTS, WHO CONSIDER CHRYSANTHOS AS MAN OF PROBITY AND CHRYSOSTOMOS AS UNSCRUPULOUS, CORRUPT POLITICAL ADVENTURER, OPINION IS THAT FORMER WOULD NOT MAKE EMPTY CHARGES, THEREFORE THEY ARE TRUE; LATTER IS NOT ABOVE ACTS OF VIOLENCE, THEREFORE HE WAS BEHIND THREATS

AND PLANTING OF BOMB. THIS SEGMENT OF OPINION IS ALSO
OFFENDED BY PRESUMPTUOUSNESS OF AKEL IN ATTEMPTING TO
DICTATE CHOICE OF ARCHBISHOP. COMMON OPINION, HOWEVER, IS
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THAT CHRYSOSTOMOS, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE PARTIES WHICH
HAVE DECLARED FOR HIM, WHICH CAN BE PARLAYED INTO VOTES IN
CHURCH ELECTIONS, IS CLEAR FRONT RUNNER.

8. ALTHOUGH MODALITIES BY WHICH DEAL WAS MADE ARE UNCLEAR,
IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT KYPRIANOU AND CHRYSOSTOMOS HAVE
REACHED AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN THEIR RESPECTIVE
PURSUITS OF HIGH STATE AND CHURCH OFFICE. BY FORCE OF
CIRCUMSTANCE, THEY HAVE SHARED THE TWIN ASPECTS OF TEMPORAL
AND SPIRITUAL LEGITIMACY AUTOMATICALLY CONFERRED UPON THEM
BY MAKARIOS' DEATH. THE MAKARIOS COALITION HAS PERCEIVED
THAT ITS INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY CONTINUED MUTUAL BACK-
SCRATCHING. UNHOLY AND UNPRINCIPLED AS THE ALLIANCE MAY
SEEM, IT IS A MEANS OF DENYING POWER TO A DISUNITED RIGHT.
EMBASSY HOLDS TO ITS ESTIMATE (REFTEL) THAT UNION OF
CHURCH AND STATE ENDED WITH MAKARIOS' DEATH, BUT PAST
WEEK HAS WITNESSED A COMPETITIVE MIXING OF CHURCH AND
POLITICS THAT SHOWS CYPRUS HAS NOT YET EMERGED FROM
BYZANTIUM.
CRAWFORD

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Message Attributes

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